TOM BRADY EYES HIS NEXT CAREER MOVE

MVP WANTS TO GO HOLLYWOOD, BUT GISELE HAS HER DOUBTS. PAGE 16

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Frozen. The spectacular ice-covered West Philly building that drew national attention is no more. City inspectors deemed the ice palace "imminently dangerous." PAGE 04

Icy marvel torn down

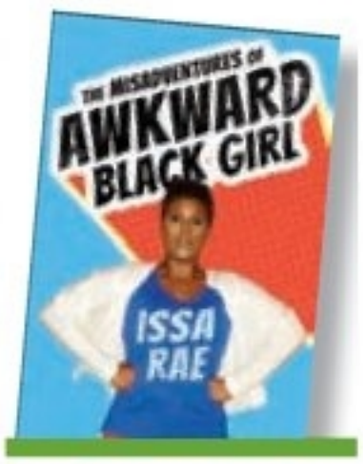
The ice palace of West Philadelphia was demolished on Monday. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

Drexel grad's app a winner on 'Shark Tank'

PAGE 12

Issa Rae on being an awkward black teen

PAGES 20-21



Four good reasons why pregnant sex rocks

PAGE 24

Macnow: Hinkie is scamming 76ers fans

PAGE 28

High schoolers learn the ropes of governing

PAL. At the 45th annual Lockheed Martin PAL Day, 18 high school students accompanied city officials for a day.

If Mayor Nutter has yet to answer your gripes about potholes and unsalted roads, you had another politician to reach on Monday.

Donte Meares, a senior at Northeast Magnet High School, got to shadow the mayor of Philadelphia

Meares, 17, of Tacony, has spent 10 years in the Police Athletic League (PAL) coaching hip-hop dancing and flag football.

"I love working with kids," Meares said. "As mayor, I'd like to reach out to someone that has no one."

Since 1947, thousands of Philadelphia youth, ages 6-to-18-years-old, have benefitted from the city's PAL youth-empowerment programs.

John Cepparulo says he's one of them. About seven years ago, his buddies invited him to play basketball, but since it was "like 4 degrees outside," Cepparulo thought they were crazy. Then they introduced him to the Rizzo PAL.

"The streets of Philadelphia aren't the best anymore," Cepparulo said. "So when you go to PAL, everything is secure. You have a cop looking out for you and you have a bunch of friends there."

A junior at Franklin Towne Charter, Cepparulo felt he hit the PAL Day lottery by being assigned to First Deputy Commissioner Richard Ross.

"My grandfather was a cop," said Cepparulo, 17, of Port Richmond. "I love the police department and all they do."

The mentored students took an oath of office as "Honorary Public Officials" during a ceremony at City Hall where PAL Day co-founder Sally Berlin, who passed away in 2014, was saluted by friends and former colleagues.

PAL student La'Shawn Kelley with City's Chief Education Officer Dr. Lori Shorr. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

Quote

"I always learn a lot from the students about what's happening in their schools, with themselves, their brothers and sisters, their neighborhoods." Shorr

Chief Education Officer Lori Shorr supervised 16-year-old La'Shawn Kelley, a junior at Mastery Charter Lenfest.

Tackling an afternoon full of meetings, Shorr and Kelley discussed summer internship possibilities, college preparatory work, and networking.

"Before I was in PAL, I don't want to say I was in the streets, but I was getting into a little trouble," said Kelley, of Cobbs Creek.

By getting involved with PAL's double-dutch and basketball leagues, as well as the Positive Images Girls Mentoring Program, Kelly says, "all of the activities keep me busy inside," away from trouble.

"I really think I changed."

JOHN CORRIGAN
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Sharing the story of 'Orphan Train'

Kalela Williams, program coordinator of the Free Library's One Book One Philadelphia program — which she called "a citywide book club" — holds up this year's selected novel "Orphan Train" by Christina Baker Kline. Visit the library for info on book-related events. / CHARLES MOSTOLLER, METRO

Crash. Gas tanker crash lights the skies

A gasoline tanker truck overturned and exploded in Pennsauken Monday, causing an inferno that could be seen from the Philly side of the Delaware River.

The vehicle crashed around 11 a.m. Monday while traveling north on Route 130 at the ramp to Route 90, which leads to the Betsy Ross Bridge to Northeast Philadelphia.

No fatalities were reported. One firefighter was hospitalized for undisclosed reasons.

The cause of the crash was not immediately available.

Nearby residential areas were evacuated after gasoline ran down the embankment towards homes and caused a second small fire.

The driver, 43, crashed the vehicle after the truck hit a guardrail.

HAZMAT workers and the Camden County Office of Emergency Management responded to the scene along with firefighters from Pennsauken and other nearby towns.

The fire was under control by 12:30 p.m.

METRO

Philadelphia

Comcast in discrimination lawsuit

The National Association of African-American Owned Media filed a $20 billion discrimination lawsuit against Philly-based giant Comcast for not broadcasting African-American channels.

The suit also name Time Warner Cable, which is pending a merger with Comcast, and Al Sharpton, who is broadcast on MSNBC.

METRO

1 NEWS

Top 3

The best of Metro.us

1 Diversity on the runway: New York Fashion Week

2 Recipe: Pad Thai, one of the most popular dishes in Thai cuisine

3 VIDEO: 7 kitchen life-hacks that will blow your mind, not your wallet

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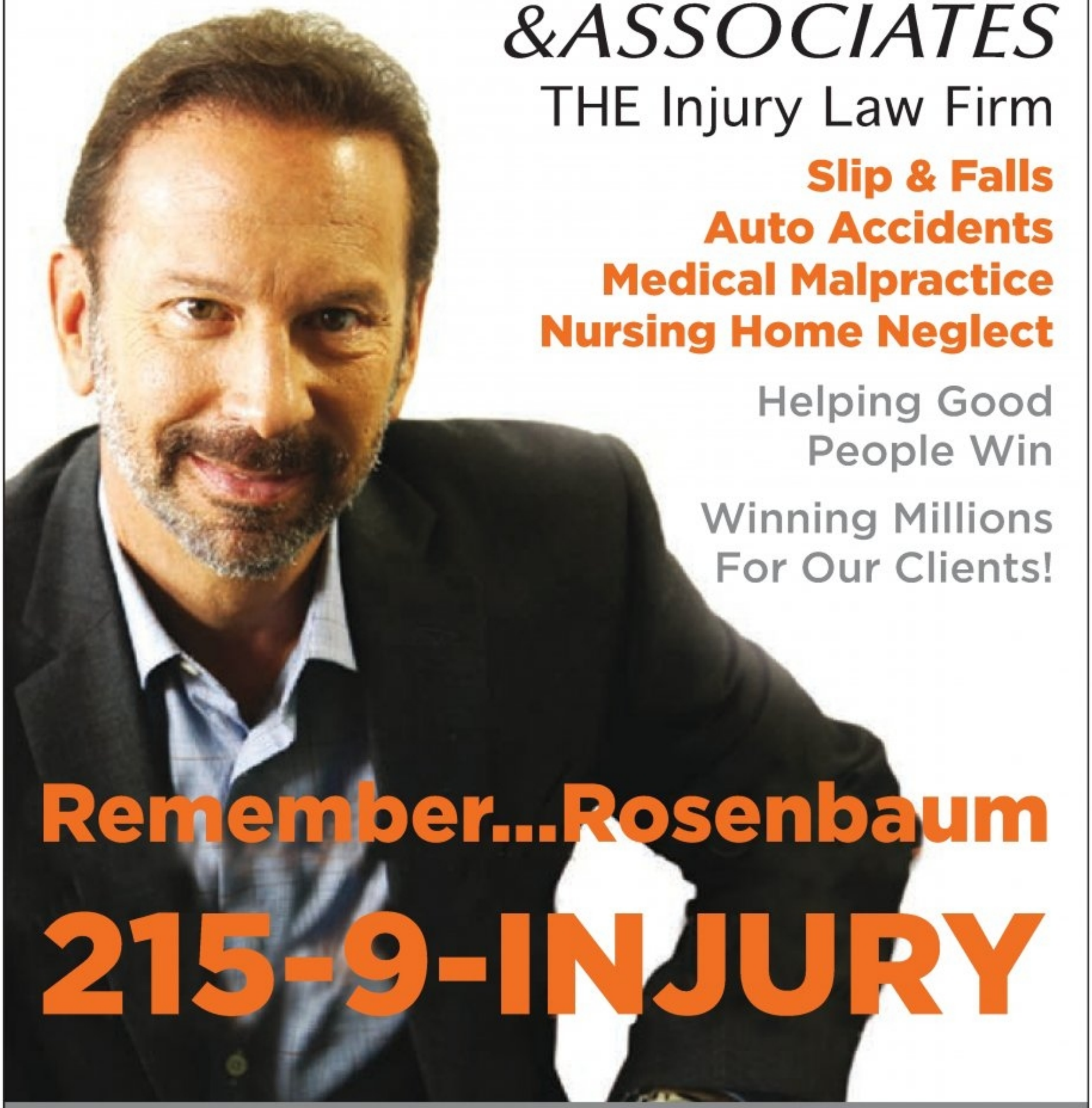

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Burlington County

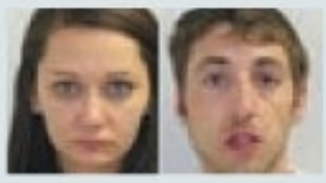
Two arrested for makeshift meth lab

Police found more than room service on Saturday when patrolling a South Jersey hotel.

During a routine check of the Econo Lodge Inn & Suites around 11 p.m., police say they smelled marijuana coming from one of the rooms.

Benjamin Shulman, 32, and Dana Ackerman, 29, were arrested for methamphetamine production with chemicals and empty vials seized as evidence. Police say a small amount of heroin and marijuana were also found.

New Jersey State Police and the Burlington County Hazmat Unit decontaminated the room. JOHN CORRIGAN



Shooting. One dead, one wounded in South Jersey office park

Police say an employee shot a co-worker four times before killing himself around 7 a.m. on Monday in Moorestown, New Jersey.

Edgar Figueroa, 42, of Philadelphia, got into a verbal altercation with Shields Business Solutions co-worker Melvin Nieves, 31, also of Philly, police said.

Figueroa pulled out a gun, chased Nieves, and fired at him before going to the parking lot where he shot himself.

Nieves was flown to Cooper University Hospital in critical condition.

Police say employees are asked to check their weapons in when they enter the building and it's unclear as to how Figueroa brought his inside the office.

Police are still investigating as to whether the weapon used was company-issued or Figueroa's own.

Motive?

A domestic situation may have preceded the murder-suicide, Moorestown police said late Monday.

- No other details were available about the cause for the argument that was followed by the shooting of Nieves by Figueroa.

Shields Business Solutions released a statement calling the incident "an unspeakable tragedy."

"We'd like the families of those involved to know that our thoughts and prayers are with them. … In order to provide support to our employees today and throughout the week, we have engaged a grief counselor who will be available here at our offices," Shields said.

JOHN CORRIGAN

So long to the ice palace of West Philly

The house is torn down. /CHARLES MOSTOLLER

Demolition. The burned — then frozen — house was torn down over collapse fears.

Demolition began Monday of the Locust Medical Center on S. 52nd Street. Encased in ice after firefighters doused a fire that broke out there last week, the building had been condemned.

The demolition came just as temps reached above freezing, raising concerns that the melting structure could face imminent collapse.

For the past seven days the building became a site for curiosity-seekers, with countless pictures posted on Instagram.

Inch-thick ice coated the structure as well as nearby sidewalks and traffic signals.

The cause of the early morning fire on Feb. 16, one of the coldest days of the winter, is still under investigation by the Fire Marshal.

The building was declared "imminently dangerous" by the city's Department of Licenses & Inspections and ordered demolished later that day. METRO

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North Philly

Man arrested trashing Little Caesars

A man who caused a ruckus at a Little Caesars pizza joint surrendered to police last Thursday after seeing himself on surveillance footage aired by local news stations.

Duane Townsend, 29, entered the pizza parlor on 1100 West Girard Ave. on Valentine's Day around 10 p.m. and argued with an employee, throwing punches and computer equipment from the counter. JOHN CORRIGAN

Duane Townsend, 29 / PPD

Oil tankers idle for months in waters off of Delaware

Rivers. Pace of Philly tankers slows to a crawl with no clear explanation.

Oil tankers have people curious as to why the ships are not moving. / GETTY IMAGES

Late last November, the tanker Olympic Flag carrying 650,000 barrels of Angolan crude dropped anchor about 7 miles off the coast in Delaware Bay, a seemingly routine shipment destined for a nearby Philadelphia refinery.

What happened next was anything but routine. Instead of discharging its cargo within days and heading off for the next port, the ship idled offshore for nearly 11 weeks, discharging the oil at an unaccountably slow rate, according to shipping sources as well as vessel tracking data on Thomson Reuters Eikon.

That vessel finally set sail two weeks ago - but by then it had already been joined by five more idling tankers, an unusual and costly congregation that has puzzled experts and traders. All the vessels arrived by mid-January, and four of them are expected to stay in the waterway for up to five more weeks.

The cause of the tanker jam - which at its peak involved more than 3.5 million barrels of crude, worth an estimated $175 million even at currently low prices - is not at all clear.

All six of the tankers appear to have been destined for Philadelphia Energy Solutions, the 335,000-barrel-per-day (bpd) refinery co-owned by The Carlyle Group and a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Partners, L.P.

One person familiar with the tankers said they are "drip feeding" crude into the plant, a rare set-up that may be caused by a lack of onshore storage space for these particular varieties of crude, or limitations on the rate at which the infrastructure can receive supplies, the person said.

"Crude ships queue and un-queue all the time. Just normal business cycles," Philadelphia Energy Solutions spokeswoman Cherice Corley said in an email when asked about the tankers. She declined any further comment on the issue. REUTERS

Quoted

"We are concerned. They have been out there for a long time. I hope they have proper food and water."

Reverend Peter Stube, Seaman's Church

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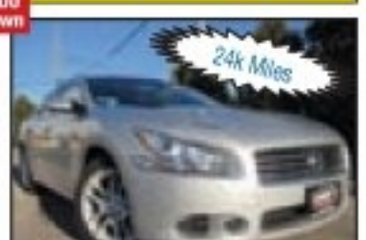

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Five things you need to know

1 Nevada road rage murder suspect was passenger in car - prosecutor

The young man charged with murder in the road-rage killing of a Las Vegas mother of four outside her home earlier this month was a passenger in one of the cars involved in the confrontation. Police were still searching for the driver, prosecutors said.

Police arrested 19-year-old Erich Nowsch last week at his home, just over a block away from the crime scene, after a brief standoff. It marked the first break in the case since 44-year-old Tammy Meyers was shot outside her home on Feb. 12.

Police say she was killed minutes after she being involved in a road-rage altercation with the occupants of a silver sedan. She had just finished giving her 15-year-old daughter a driving lesson.

"This defendant was the passenger, and we are still looking for the driver," Nevada District Attorney Steve Wolfson said after Nowsch's initial court appearance on Monday charges of murder, attempted murder and unlawful discharge of a firearm. He did not enter a plea.

Arrest warrants show Nowsch told two friends he fired 22 times at a green car after a chase through his neighborhood just a few miles from the famed Las Vegas strip, and knew that he had shot someone when it was over.

According to the warrants, Nowsch's two friends told detectives he came to their apartment and told them that he "got those kids, they were after me, and I got them," according to the affidavit. Nowsch also showed them a handgun. REUTERS

NOWSCH
GETTY IMAGES

Quoted

"This young man is charged with a senseless, stupid act of murder, and we are going to prove it in court."

Prosecutor Wolfson

A CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION AGENT STANDS GUARD ALONG THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER WALL IN TIJUANA, MEXICO

GETTY IMAGES

2 Obama warns security funding lapse would hurt US economy

President Barack Obama said that a partial shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security would mean more than 100,000 border patrol, port inspection and airport security agents would be temporarily left without paychecks. "It will have a direct impact on your economy, and it will have a direct impact on America's national security because their hard work helps to keep us safe," Obama said in a meeting of state governors at the White House. REUTERS

3 Wesleyan students treated for overdoses

Eight of the 11 students at Connecticut's Wesleyan University remain hospitalized after being treated for overdoses of the drug MDMA, or "Molly." One student, a sophomore, was in critical condition.

The sophomore at the elite school in Middletown was transported to a hospital early on Sunday with two students in less serious conditions but showing similar symptoms, Michael Whaley, vice president for student affairs, said in an emailed statement to the school.

Wesleyan President Michael S. Roth described Molly as a refined form of MDMA with "extremely dangerous" effects. MDMA is the active ingredient in the drug Ecstasy. A Wesleyan spokeswoman said in an email that seven students were transported to hospitals "with overdose symptoms..." REUTERS

4 Four dead, one seriously injured in Texas shooting

Four people were dead and one woman was in serious condition on Monday after gunfire erupted at two homes in Killeen, Texas, police said.

The dead included a 30-year-old man suspected of shooting three people in one home before forcing his wife back to their neighboring house, where the two were later found with fatal gunshot wounds, Killeen police said in a statement.

Police said they responded to a 911 call of a disturbance Sunday night and found three gunshot victims.

Officers learned the suspect had fled with his 28-year-old wife back to their house on the same street. Shortly after, shots were heard coming from inside the suspect's house, police said.

The suspect shot two women, ages 29 and 41, and a 40-year-old man at the first home, then forced his wife back to their house, a preliminary police investigation showed. REUTERS

5 Ice storm slams Southwest, nearly 1,500 flights canceled

An ice storm that hit wide parts of Texas and neighboring states on Monday knocked out power to thousands of people, led to hundreds of traffic accidents and caused nearly 1,500 flight cancellations nationwide.

The National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning for northern Texas, including Dallas, southern Oklahoma and western Arkansas. The storm that had high winds and dumped freezing rain covered highways in the area with sheets of ice. Authorities advised commuters to stay off the roads.

At Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport nearly 1,100 flights were canceled as of noon, according to tracking service FlightAware.com. REUTERS

Deadly weather

22

In Tennessee, at least 22 people have been killed in the past few days due to icy, winter conditions, the state's Emergency Management Agency said.

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A mobile phone salesman puts a SIM card into a new handset for a customer. / GETTY IMAGES

NSA chief declines comment on the spyware reports

Spyware. There have been reports of hacking into SIM card manufacturers.

The head of the National Security Agency refused to comment on reports that the U.S. government implants spyware on computer hard drives for surveillance purposes, saying "we fully comply with the law."

Navy Admiral Michael Rogers responded to reports that the NSA had embedded spyware in computers on a vast scale and that along with its British counterpart, Government Communications Headquarters, or GCHQ, had hacked into the world's biggest manufacturer of cellphone SIM cards.

The Moscow-based security software maker Kaspersky Lab said last week that the NSA had figured out how to embed spy software deep within hard drives by Western Digital, Seagate, Toshiba and other top manufacturers, giving the agency the means to eavesdrop on a majority of the world's computers.

Another report, based on documents provided by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden and published by the Intercept site, said the U.S. agency and GCHQ hacked into Gemalto, which makes SIM cards. That would potentially allow intelligence agencies to monitor the calls, texts and emails of billions of people, the report said.

Rogers, whose agency has come under intense scrutiny since 2013 when Snowden exposed details of its widespread surveillance programs, said: "I am not going to chase every allegation out there. I don't have time." REUTERS

Quoted

"Clearly I'm not going to get into the specifics of allegations. But the point I would make is, we fully comply with the law."

Rogers said at a Washington forum sponsored by the New America think-tank.

Payout

North Carolina mother claims share of $564M Powerball jackpot

A single mother said she is eager to give her four children a more comfortable life after North Carolina lottery officials confirmed on Monday that she had presented one of the tickets worth a third of the $564.1 million U.S. Powerball jackpot.

Dressed in a beige pants suit, Marie Holmes, 26, smiled as confetti fell at a Raleigh news conference where a lottery official handed her a big ceremonial check.

"I'm still processing it," Holmes said of owning one of three winning jackpot tickets sold for the Feb. 11 drawing. "It's not hit me yet."

Her ticket was purchased at a convenience store in the coastal town of Shallotte, near the South Carolina border. Holmes chose the $127 million lump-sum payment, which will total $87.9 million after taxes, according to a lottery statement.

Powerball ticket / GETTY IMAGES

The other winning tickets were purchased in Puerto Rico and Princeton, Texas, in what was the third largest Powerball jackpot and one of the largest lottery jackpots in the United States. REUTERS

Investment. Apple to spend $1.9 billion on European data centers

Apple said it would spend $1.9 billion to build two data centers in Europe that would be entirely powered by renewable energy and create hundreds of jobs.

The company said the centers, in Ireland and Denmark, will power Apple's online services, including the iTunes Store, App Store, iMessage, Maps and Siri for customers across Europe.

The investment is set to be evenly divided between the two countries, with the Irish government confirming that 850 million euros would be spent in Ireland. The two data centers are expected to begin operations in 2017.

"This significant, new investment represents Apple's biggest project in Europe to date," Apple CEO Tim Cook said in a statement.

The data center in Ireland will be located in Athenry, close to Galway on the west coast while in Denmark, it will be in Viborg, western Denmark.

In a sign of how important Apple's investment in Denmark was, the country's trade and development minister issued a statement mirroring that of the iPhone maker's, adding the two data centers would be among the largest in the world. REUTERS

Quoted

"As the Government works to secure recovery and see it spread to every part of the country, today's announcement is another extremely positive step in the right direction."

Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny said in a statement

Jobs in Galway

300

Ireland's government also reacted to the announcement, saying 300 jobs would be added in the county of Galway during the multiple phases of the project, a boost as it seeks to cut the unemployment rate below 10 percent this year.

Quoted

"We're thrilled to be expanding our operations, creating hundreds of local jobs and introducing some of our most advanced green building designs yet."

Apple CEO Tim Cook

Electronic payment

Google partners with wireless carriers to push Wallet service

Google has partnered with several large U.S. wireless carriers to preinstall its electronic payment service on phones, as the companies seek to counter Apple's recent entry into the nascent market for mobile payments.

AT&T Mobility, T-Mobile USA and Verizon Wireless will include the Google Wallet app later this year on Android smartphones sold in the United States, Google said in a post on its official blog on Monday. Google also said it has acquired technology from Softcard, a mobile payment initiative that was created by many of the wireless carriers several years ago.

Google headquarters in New York City. / GETTY IMAGES

The Google Wallet app stores a consumer's credit or debit card information and allows shoppers to pay for goods by tapping their phone against a special terminal at a retail store's checkout counter.

Google launched Wallet in 2011, but the service struggled to become a hit with consumers, in part because the wireless carriers developed the competing Softcard service. REUTERS

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How the app Scholly went from Drexel to 'Shark Tank'

Reality TV. Founder Christopher Gray tells us what it's like in the media whirlwind.

Millions of viewers were introduced to the new app Scholly on Friday night when founder Christopher Gray made his sales pitch before the all-star panel on the ABC reality show "Shark Tank."

Viewers were taken by both Gray's story — raised by a single mom, he managed to earn over $1 million dollars in scholarship money — and by the fact that the app created a heated discussion among the judges, with Mark Cuban, Kevin O'Leary, and Robert Herjavec walking off of the set in anger.

We emailed Grey shortly after the episode aired to get the inside story.

How did you feel after hearing three of the judges had walked off set?
I knew about the fight for a while, but it was interesting to see it on television. I think I made the right decision and chose investors who believed in Scholly both as a business and as a venture that will help millions of students pay for college. I could have easily answered any questions Mark and Robert had, but since Daymond and Lori offered me exactly what I asked for, I had no reason to. Daymond and Lori have really supported Scholly since I filmed my episode and I'm excited to continue to work with them.

How did the Drexel University senior come up with Scholly?
After a tedious and very long process during school, I won $1.3 million in scholarships. It took me months simply to find a list of scholarships I was eligible for. Also, before I created Scholly, I spent three years consulting and helping other students to find and apply for scholarships as well.

What's some advice to give high school seniors, who are making their final college decisions?
Apply for as many scholarships as possible so funds will not be an issue in your decision-making.

Some students can't attend their dream school due to lack of funds, so making sure they put the same amount of effort into applying for scholarships as they do applying for school is super important.

Christopher Gray during his presentation before the judges. / "SHARK TANK," ABC

What do you think is next for Scholly?
Although we are focused on the scholarship search at the moment, we are working to make the scholarship process even easier. Next, we are working to move beyond scholarships and evolving into a platform that students can use to get into college and until they graduate.

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Having bad credit can effect apartment rental applications, car insurance, and in some cases, getting a job. / ISTOCK

Now credit score checks are free

Financial service. Once a charged-for service is now offered at no cost.

There are still some mysteries in the world of credit scores, which financial institutions use to determine whether to give a person a loan and how much to charge for it. But the biggest unknown — what is your score? — has been solved.

While consumers could get their credit reports for years at no charge, their scores were not available, or they had to pay for them. In the past year, however, more than 60 million Americans suddenly were able to get either their FICO score, provided by the Fair Isaac Corp, or their VantageScore, from a system developed by TransUnion Corp.

Among the other financial institutions giving out scores each month are Ally, Chase, Bank of America, Barclays, Discover and USAA.

"I keep this growing list of all of the free credit-related services that are now being given away from websites and credit card issuers," says John Ulzheimer, president of consumer education at CreditSesame.com. "It's cool to see the momentum."

The push for open access came from both market forces and the U.S. government. The hope is that consumers with ready access to their scores will make smarter financial choices, like not paying bills late.

Participants

Among the other financial institutions giving out scores each month are Ally, Chase, Bank of America, Barclays, Discover and USSA.

So far, so good. "The anecdotal evidence we're seeing from both lenders and consumers indicates people who know their FICO Scores tend to develop healthier credit habits than people who don't know their scores," says FICO spokesman Jeff Scott.

Discover, which has provided about 10 million scores a month for the past year, has seen questions from customers evolve from basic to the minutiae of the many factors, such as your payment history and the amount you owe, that drive the credit score algorithm. The company added a specially trained customer service unit to deal with the questions, says Discover President Roger Hochschild.

What consumers generally need to know is that credit data is collected by three reporting agencies — Equifax Inc, TransUnion and Experian Plc — and there are a range of scores generated. Car dealers may use a slightly different score than mortgage lenders, for instance.

Most will find their scores do not shift much, month to month. At Discover, 80 percent see a move of less than 20 points a month, according to Hochschild.

Also, most volatility is at the high end, above 775, on scores that top out at just above 800. "When you move from 790 to 750, you're still in the great range," Hochschild says.

A score below 600 is considered bad, while roughly from 620 to 690 is average. Whatever score you see you on your monthly statement will be a good indicator of your general creditworthiness. If it shocks you, you can take action. REUTERS

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TIMOTHYSYKES.COM

Timothy Sykes is a millionaire stock trader and entrepreneur.

Rules for banking in the stock market

Many people want to "beat the market," making more money than other people do. I got rich using the rules below and now I also have created several millionaire students in just a few years. Here's how to follow in their footsteps:

Rule #1: Dream big and work hard

It sounds fraudulent to say I have taken a few thousand dollars and turned it into several million dollars within a few years, but I show every single trade, audits and tax records publicly to convince even most ardent doubters.

I want you to believe and to study so hard that you will actually make it happen. I live to create more millionaires and am always on the lookout for dedicated students who are willing to work harder than they ever thought possible to achieve their goals.

Rule #2: Lose battles to win wars

I know you want to get rich quickly, and while I initially did and now my top students have, we all had to lose along the way to help us understand it's crucial to cut losses quickly sometimes, in order to stay on the proper path to getting rich. My top students and I win about 75 percent of the time, but it's so important that when we're wrong we admit it and lose little battles to win the overall war. Too many traders and investors go down with the ship on their investments and they take those large losses very personally, crushing their confidence and accounts in one fell swoop. I cut losses quickly so no one stock trade or investment ever has the ability to risk disaster for me.

This year's Oscar-winning movies were truly well done. The industry is becoming more and more meticulous thanks to technology and competition.

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Blood clots are taking down some of the NBA's brightest stars; it's time we learn more about this dangerous condition.

Rule #3: Prepare endlessly

There are trading and investment opportunities every minute of every day, but sadly most people are unprepared to take full advantage of them. Do you know how to short sell stocks, and is your brokerage account setup in a way that you actually can? Remember most small companies fail and surprisingly even in bull markets, most stocks drop in price. Or are you an optimist and are you ready to ride the latest hot stock all the way up? Know your personality and understand how to tell the difference between good and bad companies.

For exclusive commentary, visit **Metro.us/blogs.**

What Tim Sykes is into this week...

1

The U.S. stock markets are hitting new highs every day now. Long live the bull market!

2

Carmelo Anthony bowed out of this terrible season for the Knicks and did what he had to do to be healthy for next year's season.

3

The battle for next generation cars is heating up between Google, Tesla and Apple. Who will win? Consumers.

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2 CULTURE

Twitter feed

Today, Liam Payne has lofty aspirations, Mike Tyson wants back in the ring, Ricky Gervais is doling out good advice, Karen Gillan knows what she likes and Mark Duplass knows what he doesn't like.

@Real_Liam_Payne: I wish I was harry potter

@MikeTyson: Damn - I wish I could fight Mayweather!

@rickygervais: If someone says something stupid or nasty to you on Twitter, just look at their photo and read their bio & I guarantee you will feel better.

@karengillan: The Slap is my favourite TV show on TV at the moment!

@MarkDuplass: Update: Caviar is gross.

1

Look out, Hollywood, here comes Tom Brady

Hey, Tom Brady, you were just named the NFL's Super Bowl MVP. What are you going to do now? Head for Hollywood, apparently. According to the fine, reputable folks at Star magazine, Brady is reportedly mulling over an acting career once he retires from football, because why not? "At 37, Tom knows he only has a few seasons left before retirement. He's thinking ahead and believes he could become a huge movie star," a source says. "He's used to being a superstar. After winning the Super Bowl again, he's thinking about new challenges outside of football." Only one problem, though. His wife, Gisele Bundchen, is said to be not so hot on the idea, if only because of the potential for him to spend time on-screen with attractive female co-stars. But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

THE WORD

Ned Ehrbar takes on the world of gossip.

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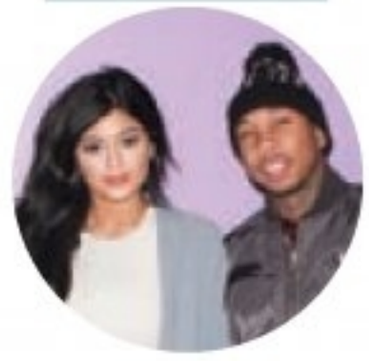
2

That Kylie Jenner and Tyga thing? Not so much.



Tough breaks for Kylie Jenner. The 17-year-old reality personality has been "crying all week" over the state of her relationship with 25-year-old rapper Tyga, according to Radar Online. "She is afraid that Tyga is going to break up with her," a source explains. And with good reason, I'd imagine, since Tyga himself said they aren't dating. And he's apparently been getting pressure from his management team to keep his distance from Jenner, which may or may not have something to do with the stink Amber Rose was raising about the pairing last week. "Tyga's advisers have told him to not be spotted out in public with Kylie doing anything romantic, including holding hands, or kissing," the source says. "Tyga has tried to reassure Kylie that they are solid, but she has her doubts." And now I'm off to feel terrible about myself for spending this much time focusing on the dating life of a 17 year old. Toodles!

Daily video

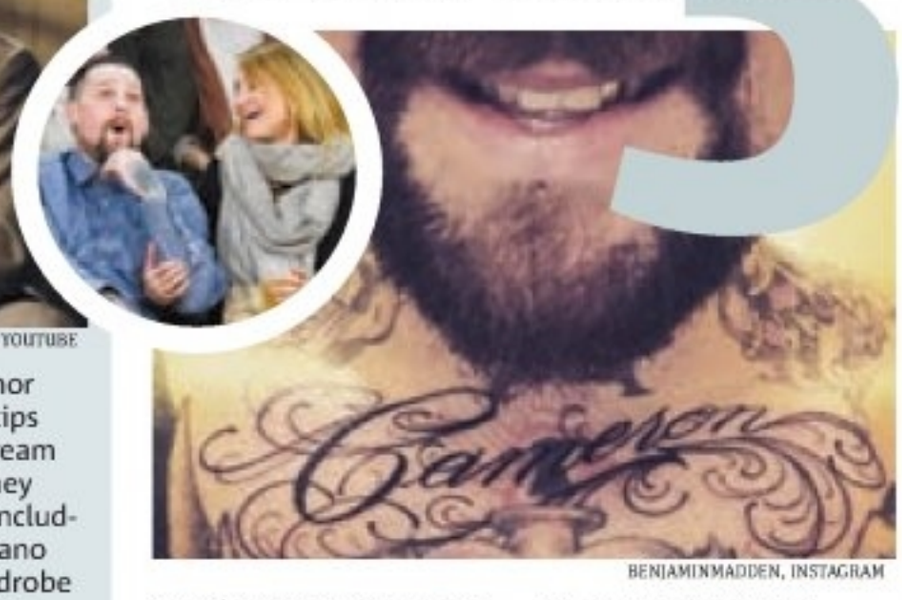
COLLEGEHUMOR, YOUTUBE

21 steps to making an Oscar movie

Awards Season is behind us, finally, so obviously it's time to start worrying about next year. If you are a fledging filmmaker or producer hoping your next project earns you a spot at the Academy Awards in 2016, College Humor has some helpful tips for making that dream a reality. In fact, they have 21 of them, including suspenseful piano music, period wardrobe and a disability. Also, beautiful actresses in ugly prosthetics never hurt. Just saying, you can safely put "American Gay Racist" at the top of your 2016 Oscar ballot.

3

Benji Madden celebrates Cameron Diaz with a new tattoo



BENJAMINMADDEN, INSTAGRAM

Nothing says "I love you" like getting a woman's name tattooed somewhere on your body, right? At least that's the thinking of Benji Madden, who had wife Cameron Diaz's name emblazoned across his chest as a sign of his devotion. To be fair, though, Madden is already so tatted up that the new addition is kind of tough to make out amid all the other inky noise. Still, how romantic? I guess?

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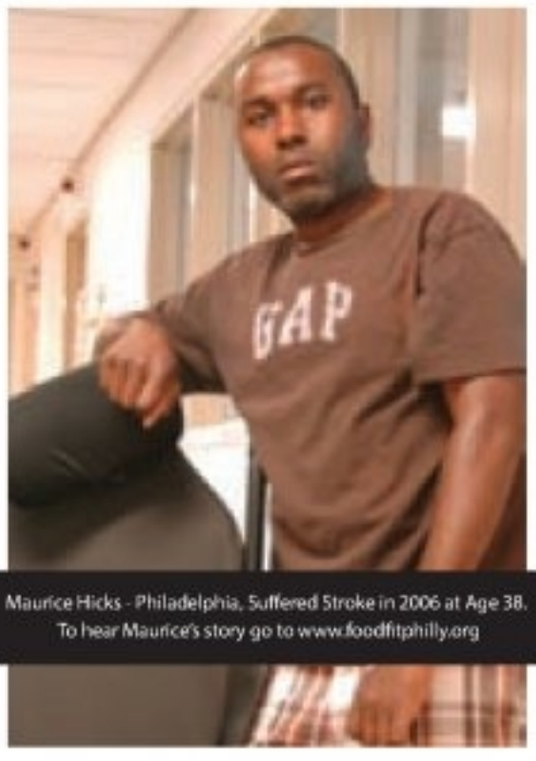

Maurice Hicks - Philadelphia, Suffered Stroke in 2006 at Age 38.
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NICOLAS CAGE HAS STILL GOT IT

STREAM THIS

Matt Prigge's guide to what you can watch on the Internet.

MATT PRIGGE
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Nicolas Cage stars in "Joe," now on Instant. / ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

Nicolas Cage movie

'Joe'

Netflix Instant
Nicolas Cage has had money problems for awhile — problems that have forced him to take seemingly any project he's offered, which in turn has tarnished his critical reputation. But he's still got it, when he's actually asked to show it. In the latest from David Gordon Green ("George Washington," "Pineapple Express"), the Oscar-winner may be playing an ex-con who becomes a role model for a wayward kid ("Mud"'s Tye Sheridan). But much like his character, he's a very reluctant goodie, and his growling, hungry turn is by no means Cage playing nice. Cherish it, as these days he's rarely so engaged.

Drama

J.K. SIMMONS CHECKS OUT DYLAN. / PROVIDED

'The Music Never Stopped'

Netflix Instant
Fresh Oscar-winner J.K. Simmons can do mean and nice, but he's somewhere in between in this 2011 weepie, about an emotionally distant dad trying to cope with a son who suffers a brain tumor. That means listening to a lot of the Grateful Dead, but it also means watching Simmons' precise underplaying.

Indie

'The Heart Machine'

Netflix Instant
A clinical look at Internet-bred alienation, "The Heart Machine" observes a Brooklynite (John Gallagher Jr.), who strongly suspects his Berlin-based Internet girlfriend (Kate Lyn Sheil) actually lives in Manhattan. His clumsy investigation methods, however, prove increasingly creepy, and this becomes more of a horror film for the young.

"The Heart Machine" / FILM BUFF

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Interview with the friendly vampire

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Q&A. Jemaine Clement digs into the vampire trend with the mockumentary 'What We Do in the Shadows.'

"Flight of the Conchords" star Jemaine Clement is taking on the vampire phenomenon, teaming up with co-director and best friend Taika Waititi for "What We Do in the Shadows," a mockumentary chronicling the daily — or nightly — lives of four everyday undead bloodsuckers living in Wellington, New Zealand.

Were there specific challenges in constructing a narrative as a documentary?
Yes, I think so. We were trying to get some action scenes in it, stuff like fights and special effects and let people improvise. But it also frees you up for things. The way we did it was we wrote a script, but we didn't show it to any of the actors. Because when people try to act like they're in a documentary, I feel like you can tell. People just don't talk how they would talk.

So then how much of that original script is the same as what you ended up with?
That's a great question, and I don't know. I would be interested to see that, to see how similar they are. But I haven't ever compared them. I haven't looked at the script since.

Were there any vampire elements or cliches you wanted to avoid

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Jemaine Clement plays a vampire out of a bodice ripper novel in "What We Do in the Shadows." / PALADIN FILMS

referencing?
We've got "Twilight" references in it, which I kind of regret. While we were filming it, the last "Twilight" movie was coming out, and we wanted to get a shot of them taking down the "Twilight" poster as Nick is getting over being a vampire, saying this vampire trend of the teens has gone again and you have to wait for the next one. We did have lots of references of how being a vampire becomes cool and then it becomes cheesy, and how that affects their lives. They're cool for a while and then they're not. But that dropped out.

But no sparkling jokes.
We did film some. We had them in the sunrise and they burst into flame, and I'm going, "F—, I thought I was going to sparkle!" But the special effect didn't quite work. They had to wear these gloves that look like hands so they could light on fire, and the gloves were so thick it just looked like their hands had swollen to look massive.

NED EHRBAR
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Teamwork

How was it co-directing with Taika Waititi?
We're used to working with each other, and we talked about the idea for so long that we had very similar ideas of how it was going to be. Amazingly, we never argued. But when we first started doing theater shows, there were times that I thought we were going to punch each other — even onstage. But those kinds of conflicts have been worked out.

TAIKA WAITITI
GETTY IMAGES

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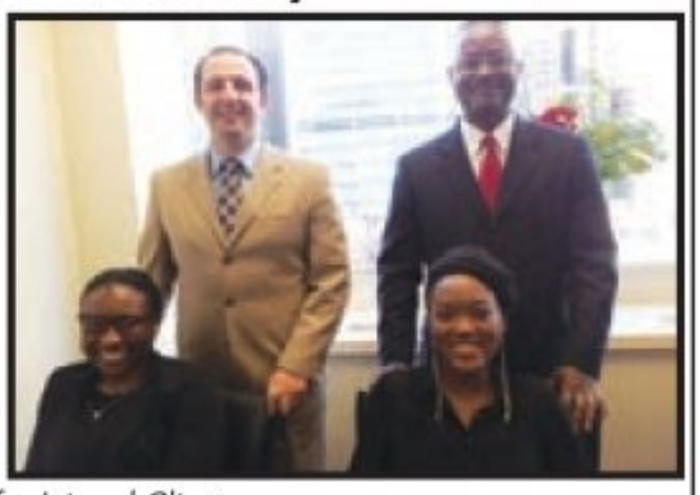

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(But, remember. he wasn't always an old ugly man - once, he was just ugly)

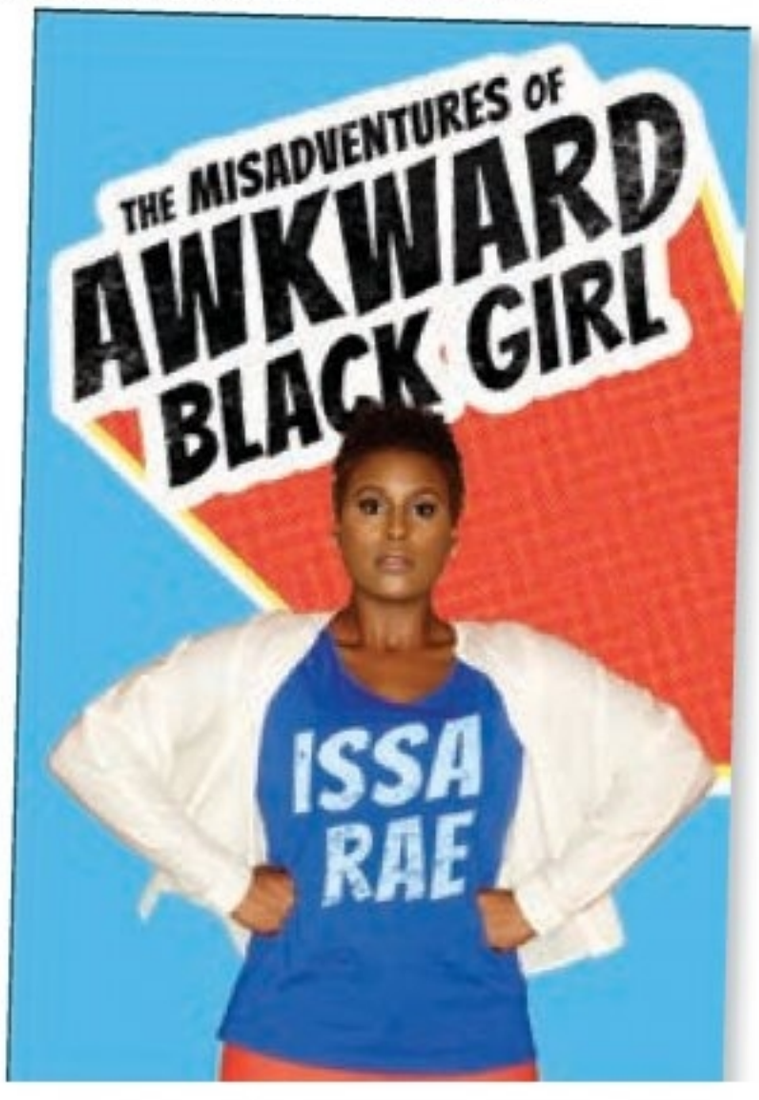
Issa Rae: 'Oh s—, people are going to read this!'

Life advice. The "Awkward Black Girl" jumps from Web series to book deal to HBO with, dare we say, grace.

Twenty-six-year-old Issa Rae first found her voice with her "Awkward Black Girl" Web series, which has almost 200,000 subscribers on YouTube. Since then, she's launched her own initiative called Color Creative, producing pilots for women and minority writers, has a talk show on the Aspire.tv network and is producing an HBO show with Comedy Central talk show host Larry Wilmore called "Insecure." She also found time to write a collection of essays about being a teen, "The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl." We called Rae to get her to dish even more.

You have no shortage of projects to keep you busy. Why a book?
I've always wanted to write a book, ever since I was a little girl. [Originally], I set out to write a fiction book, but I was having a conversation with my editor and she was like, "Why don't you just write it about yourself? You're an awkward person, so what experiences made you awkward?"

How do you get to a mind-set where you're unafraid to put it all out there?
Initially, it felt like writing in a journal, like it was just for me. Writing is a really intimate process because you're by yourself, so it just felt like me unloading on a page. It wasn't until I turned it in and my editor gave me the manuscript that I was like, "Oh s—, people are going to read this!"



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Issa Rae writes about being a cyber-sexting pre-teen (and other awkward stories) in "The Misadventures Of Awkward Black Girl." KAT CONTRERAS

Who was the first person you let read it?
My younger sister was the first person to read it in its entirety. I sent it to her being like, "I'm having anxiety issues about all that I revealed. Can you please read it and let me know if it's too TMI?" So she read it and was like, "You should let dad read it." I said, "Now there's a thought."

Uh-oh.
Right. But I did and it forced us to talk about some things that I never had talked to him about before. He was completely supportive. He told me, "You come from the social media generation where you guys put it all out there and you signed up to write this book." That said, he also told me my family did not sign up for it and I should be mindful of that. So I did go back and censor it a bit.

The book is all about the awkward experiences you had when you were a teen. What do you wish you could tell your 15-year-old self?
That it gets better and not to try so hard. I just tried so hard. I know that's the universal story of being a teen, but it still makes me cringe.

How does being an awkward teen compare with being an awkward 20-something?
Being awkward as a teen is more forgivable, but if you're awkward as a 20-something people are more like, come on now. Even thinking about the conversations I have with my friends, when we talk about a guy being awkward with a girl, we're just like, "Get it together!"

EMILY LAURENCE
@EmLaurence
emily.laurence@metro.us

On her new show

Your "Awkward Black Girl" Web series has been massively successful, and now you're developing a show with HBO, which is a totally different beast. What has been the biggest challenge?
With the Internet, I have so much autonomy over my own creations. I write it, produce it, and then it's online where people can watch it, and then I know whether or not people like it within five minutes. With TV, it's a process. I just want people to see it. I'm so impatient.

TV watch list

Think Andrew can win on "Masterchef"? / GREG GAYNE

COMEDY

'Repeat After Me'

"Goldbergs" star Wendi McLendon-Covey hosts this show, where she instructs celebrities, through an earpiece, on goofy things to do out in public. The Biebs himself appears on tonight's episode. **8:30 P.M., ABC**

TALK SHOWS

'Late Night with Seth Meyers'

After you've said farewell during the "Parks and Recreation" series finale, you can catch the whole cast talking to Seth Meyers on his show. **12:35 A.M., NBC**

REALITY

'Masterchef Junior'

We're down to two finalists for tonight, who will be competing for a $100,000 prize, a trophy and presumably, bragging rights for life. **SEASON FINALE, 8 P.M., FOX**
LISA WEIDENFELD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

U-HAUL SELF STORAGE will sell to satisfy the lein of the landlord at public sale by competitive bidding on the dates listed below, the goods stored in the spaces of the following tenants:

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U-HAUL MOVING & STORAGE AT WEST OREGON AVE & 24TH ST,
2990 S 20TH ST, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19145
AUCTION DATE: 3/3/15 TIME: 10:30 AM
NYRAYA ADAMS 1033, BARBARA ALAMIA 1062, WILLIAM PUGH 1149, SHAINA DAVIS 1177, ANGELINA SANCHEZ 1241, ABANDON ROOM 1268, RIDELLE WILKERSON 1280, PAUL CARRIER 1336, CHRISTOPHER BRADY 1357, AMANDA TAYLOR 1365, JAMES SPINELLI 1406, ROPERT DALY 1422, MAURICE M TAYLOR 1430, WILLIAM MCWILLIAM 1431, TAMICA TAYLOR 1474, RICK SAUNDERS 1529, CORTNEY BLUE 1532, RASHAAN CROMWELL 1567, DOMINQUE WASHINGTON 1575, GERALD STRANIX 1580, RAFAEL THOMAS 1590, QUESTINA WOODS 1601, EMILY WESTER 1616, STEVE SANTOSUSSO 1750, REGINALD WILLIAMS 1751, NYRAYA ADAMS P011, JASON KENT PK10, SONJA MONK PK12, CASSANDRA SMITH PK4, MARC PITCHER PK7

U-HAUL MOVING & STORAGE OF OVERBROOK
6141 LANCASTER AVE, PHILADELPHIA, PA 19151
AUCTION DATE: 3/3/15 TIME: 9:00 AM
WANDA JOHNSON 1014, ANTONIO WILLIAMS 1206, FREDDIE HALL 1510, MARLENE ANDERSON 1514

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PLUS

Tip

Keep them bundled up

Rotbart says there is something to the old adage that if you leave the house without a coat, you're going to catch a cold. "[A child] won't catch an immediate cold as soon as they walk outside without proper clothing, but they could likely get sick a few days later," he says. This is because the virus that causes the common cold thrives in cold environments, so as much as your child may persist, make sure he or she is wearing a coat, hat, gloves, scarf and boots when going outside.

Grandma was right: Bundling up does limit sickness. / ISTOCK

5 Ways to keep your child from getting sick

No matter how liberally you apply hand sanitizer to your kids — and their toys — potential flu-causing germs are everywhere. While you can't always prevent your child from getting sick, there are some things you can do to limit their number of sick days. We called Dr. Harley Rotbart, professor of pediatric infectious diseases at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and author of 'No Regrets Parenting,' for his tips.

EMILY LAURENCE

1 Load them up on vitamin C

"There have been a couple dozen studies showing that people who have high intakes of vitamin C daily have shorter and less severe colds," Rotbart says. A vitamin C-rich diet won't stop your child from getting sick, but it will help them fight the cold off faster. Besides oranges, stock up on strawberries, pineapples and kiwi.

2 Limit the video game playing

Our experts says numerous studies have shown that people who exercise on a regular basis get sick 50 percent less than those who don't. While the studies have only been done in adults because it's hard to scientifically measure a child's exercise level, Rotbart says the findings no doubt apply to kids. "The difference is dramatic," he says.

3 Vaccinate your kids

If you're wondering whether vaccinations are really safe, stop. "The absence of vaccines cause diseases that are potentially life-threatening," Rotbart says. So despite what certain Hollywood A-listers are doing, this is the most important way you can keep your child healthy.

4 Wash hands, wash hands, wash hands

This no-brainer is somewhat of a cliché by now, but it's one of the most important ways to keep your child healthy. Rotbart says day-care teachers should have kids wash their hands after playing with shared toys, and parents should carry hand sanitizer for situations where there is no soap and water around, like after riding the subway.

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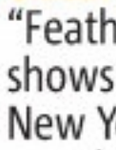
First grader publishes book to protect birds

Children's books. "Feathers on Fifth" shows a side to New York City most people don't notice.

For many city dwellers, wildlife is often ignored; looked over in favor of skyscrapers, shops and restaurants. But when 7-year-old Calvin Huber spotted a robin's nest in a holly bush on New York's Fifth Avenue, he was captivated.

By carefully observing the mother bird and her eggs, he realized that being a bird in the big city brought specific challenges and predators not experienced elsewhere.

He started documenting the little robin's nest, taking both photos and videos. Now, he's sharing what he's learned with his new book, "Feathers on Fifth." The book features a robin family and the dangers they face as birds living in New York City, just like the bird family he saw.



EMILY LAURENCE
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Calvin Huber, 7, with his book "Feathers on Fifth." / PROVIDED

Who it helps

All for charity

Proceeds from the book sales will be donated to the National Audubon Society, Wild Bird Fund, environmental education at Manhattan Country School (Huber's school) and Habitat for Humanity. The book is out now, available at Barnes and Noble and Amazon.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned will sell, to satisfy lien of the owner, at public sale by competitive bidding on **February 27, 2015**, at **11:00AM**, at the Extra Space Storage facility located at: **1553 Grant Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19115, (215) 464-3913**. The personal goods stored therein by the following may include, but are not limited to general household, furniture, boxes, clothes, and appliances.

184 – Colleen Seaman; 445 – Tim Friel; 388 – Theresa Marie
89 – Diana Wojtylak; 174 – Kenneth Wojtylak;
530 – Bolger Enterprises Inc.; 244 – Anthony Dominello II

Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the time of sale. All goods are sold as is and must be removed at the time of purchase. Extra Space Storage reserves the right to refuse any bid. Sale is subject to adjournment.

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B102 Kia Nicole Gibson, B106 Yasmeen J. Whitehead, B108 Rudolph Williams Jr., B129 Otis E. Gaskins, B138 Alicia Dawn Garcia, B211C Ronald Hines, B216C Tiarra Benedict, E105 John Jerome Cule, F102 Paula L. Robinson, F134 Amanda A. Donald.

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Toys

Barbie's latest career: Superhero

Barbie has held down more fictional careers than most any doll, but according to a new survey, little girls aren't just looking for a pretty doll to play various roles, they want her to kick some serious butt. Mattel surveyed 2,400 girls between the ages of 3-and-10-years-old and found 90 percent of them wish there were more superheroes for girls. With that in mind, the toy company created Barbie in Princess Power.

Barbie in Princess Power officially launched at the New York Toy Fair last week. The dolls are styled in bold-colored outfits and sparkling capes — this is a superhero, who fights crime in knee-high heeled boots and has silky hair with rainbow streaks.

The hope is Barbie in Princess Power will help kids find their inner heroine and give them a way to play out their own superhero stories. Parents can learn more at BeSuper.com.

EMILY LAURENCE

THE BARBIE IN PRINCESS POWER LINE INCLUDES DOLLS, DVDS AND KID-SIZED COSTUMES. / PROVIDED

The truth about pregnant sex

Expert advice. We give you four reasons why you should get busy.

Sex during pregnancy is actually associated with some pretty substantial benefits. / ISTOCK

It isn't uncommon for pregnant ladies to feel particularly randy, especially during the second trimester. Even so, some preggo women and their partners might be freaked out by the idea of pregnant sex.

"It takes about 10 months to cook a baby, which is a long time to not have sex," says Pittsburgh-based OB-GYN Dr. Draion Burch (aka Dr. Drai). Unless your experiencing pregnancy complications or your health care provider is concerned about you going into early labor, Dr. Drai says sex during a regular, low-risk pregnancy is perfectly safe. In fact, he encourages it.

You'll feel less stressed

"Sex, in general, improves things like anxiety, sleep and depression," says Dr. Drai. "It's also been found to boost your immune system, help fight heart disease, make your skin look great, and even make you live longer."

It's a chance to connect

"Sex during pregnancy helps maintain that emotional connection with each other," Dr. Drai says. "And sometimes men can get kind of weird with pregnancy because they feel like the woman is all about the baby, instead of being all about them."

Dr. Drai adds that making time for physical intimacy — whether through intercourse, foreplay or just cuddling — should be a priority. Plus, once you are recovering from childbirth and caring for a newborn, sex will likely be the last thing on your mind. Try taking advantage of this calm-before-the-storm time to have sex.

It might make for an easier labor

Will regular sexual activity during pregnancy help you have a smoother delivery? Dr. Drai thinks so. "I think that for women who have sex throughout their pregnancy, their labors are easier for a vaginal delivery," he says.

MARIANNE HAYES
@ MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

O cool!

You'll have better orgasms

During pregnancy, blood flow naturally increases throughout the body — including the nether regions. "There's a lot of blood flow to the pelvis, which actually makes it easier to reach orgasm when you're pregnant," says Dr. Drai, who adds that this contributes to heightened sensitivity to sexual stimulation. "Because of this, a lot of my patients say sex is great while pregnant."

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Horoscope

♓ Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20
If you have an idea for your own business, take the plunge. Extra cash can be made if you find new ways to put your skills to use.

♈ Aries | March 21-April 20
Get busy whittling down your never-ending to-do list. Focus on your destination, and push hard until you reach your goal.

♉ Taurus | April 21-May 21
Rather than reveal every detail of your plan, be secretive in order to have a greater impact when you do share it with others. Moderation will be key.

♊ Gemini | May 22-June 20
A leadership role is likely if you make contributions to a group to which you belong. Your self-esteem will increase.

♋ Cancer | June 21-July 22
You will be put in an awkward position if you have to explain claims that someone has been making. Do not embellish the truth.

♌ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22
Don't feel you have to explain your actions to everyone who comes your way. Your desire to do everything yourself will distance you from your competition.

♍ Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22
Money matters will be on your mind. Scrutinize your budget and see where you can cut back. Start with non-essential expenditures.

♎ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22
Your love life is looking good. You can reach the next level with your partner, or you will find someone you feel comfortable with.

♏ Scorpio | Oct. 23-Nov. 21 Spend time on the projects that will bring you fulfillment. Cultivate the people who will have the greatest influence on your future.

♐ Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21 You will experience a desire to make your life better. With your skill, you will be able to make a substantial impact on others.

♑ Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Put all your effort into your work and you will reap the rewards. Choose another day to make planned changes to your home.

♒ Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb. 18 You will be instrumental in helping a friend solve a troublesome problem. Your experience will serve as a teaching tool. Travel looks favorable. EUGENIA LAST

Sudoku: Easy and hard

7			8		1		5	
8	9				2			
				7				4
4				3	5	1	9	
	3						6	
	1	6	7	2				3
1				4				
			5				8	7
	7		3		6			1

	7	8		4				
3	6	4	7			8	5	
			5		8			
7					9		2	
6								4
	5		4					8
			2		5			
	1	7			6	9	4	5
				1		6	7	

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Letters to the editor

Focus on science, not shirts

Re: 'Yo Hollywood We Need More Girls in Stem' (Metro, Feb. 19)
The author of the piece, Jenna Busch, claims sexism in the case of scientist Matt Taylor's clothing choice. "Anyone remember scientist Matt Taylor's choice of a shirt full of scantily clad ladies during the broadcast of the historic landing of a ship on a comet? Classy, sir." The author's logic in this case is completely sexist — women should be focusing on a man's clothing choice rather then the amazing feat of science that occurred? If Miss Busch would like to empower young women, maybe she should educate them on science and math — rather then projecting the image to your readers that women should focus on clothing choices, children's toys, and other existing sexist stereotypes. Her view is almost comically ironic and myopic, and I am saddened another article makes women appear to focus on a scientist's "choice of shirt" (however, unprofessional) rather then getting young girls excited about science. Miss Busch should write an article about women in said fields; this will objectively show young girls success in science is not gender-specific.
A. PRIMAVERA, VIA EMAIL

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Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact info.

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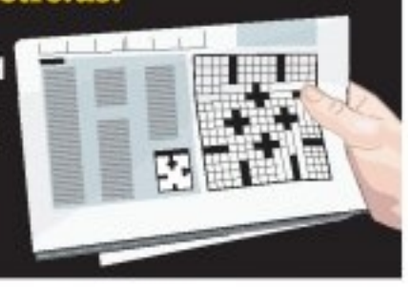
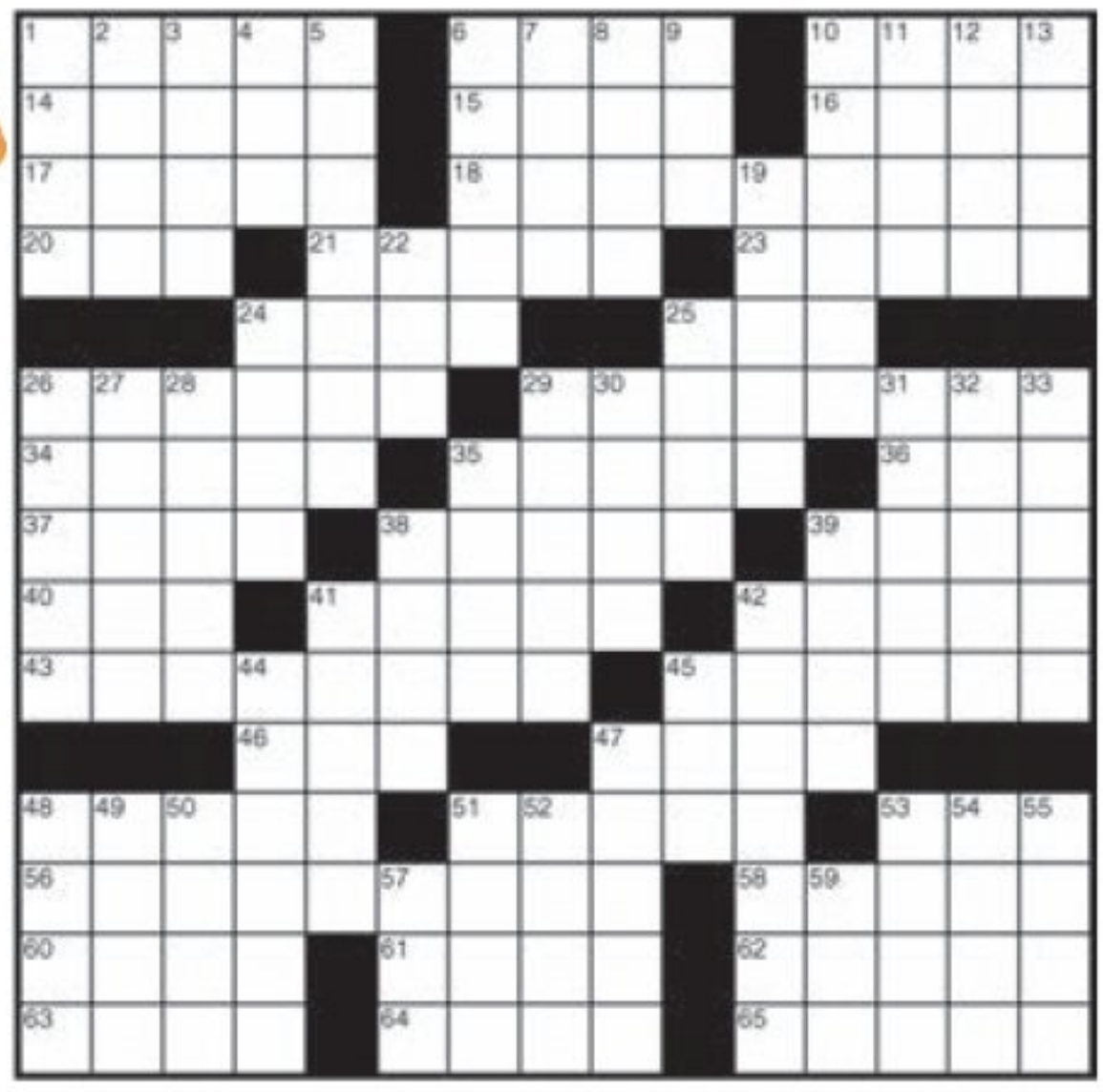
Use your smartphone to find today's crossword answers! Download and open the Blippar app on your smartphone and hold the screen over the puzzle.


Crossword

Across
1 Part of SST
6 Marshes
10 "Sure thing!"
14 It merged with BP
15 — fixe
16 Corsica neighbor
17 Internet link
18 Cold-light producers
20 Plea at sea
21 Destined
23 Cut drastically
24 Mild expletive
25 Sporty truck
26 Observation
29 Monty Python pieces
34 Raise high
35 Minty quaff
36 Endorse
37 Walk in the woods
38 Frothy
39 Milan moola, once
40 Stein filler
41 African river
42 Cower in fear
43 Swimming instructor
45 "Crocodile —"
46 "He'll get —!"
47 Not much (2 wds.)
48 Sonnet stanza
51 Mosey along
53 Festive night
56 Mechanic's tool (2 wds.)
58 Afghan, maybe
60 Haunches
61 Troubadour prop
62 Aerie builder
63 World's fair
64 Smirk's kin
65 Chorus platform

Down
1 Snead and Spade
2 Melville title
3 Drowses off
4 Finish a cake
5 Reassure
6 Liquor buy
7 Ms. McClurg
8 Dweeb
9 Get the drift
10 Bellowed
11 Lamb's alias
12 Fortas and Burrows
13 Leftovers dish
19 35mm setting (2 wds.)
22 Grill, perhaps
24 Strong wind
25 Heavy hydrogen discoverer
26 Fix up
27 Banish
28 — — fresh start
29 Roly-poly
30 To boot
31 Helen of Troy's story
32 Uncanny
33 Archaeology find
35 Roman Hera
38 Cries audibly
39 Fontanne's husband
41 IOUs
42 More peaceful
44 El —
45 Two-bagger (abbr.)
47 Daisy Mae's man
48 Hideous monster
49 Heart of the matter
50 Office fill-in
51 The chills
52 Silent
53 Joule fractions
54 Meadow rodent
55 Aquarius' tote
57 Pipe bend
59 Yes in Tokyo

Yesterday's answer



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3

SPORTS

Spring training news

Utley reveals hurt ankle

Just when things appeared to be as bad as they could be at Phillies spring training, Chase Utley revealed to the media Monday that he hurt his ankle during the offseason. "It's improved dramatically over the past two weeks but it's still not perfect," Utley said.

Flyers play their way back into playoff picture

NHL. Philly is just four points behind Boston for the East's final playoff spot.

At first, it was improbable. Then, it was interesting. Now, it's a reality.

The Philadelphia Flyers, pretty much left for dead a month ago, are officially playoff contenders.

Behind a pair of matinee wins over the weekend — a shootout victory on Saturday against the Nashville Predators followed by Sunday's win over the Washington Capitals — the Flyers inched within four points of a postseason berth. Their 63 points trail the Boston Bruins, who with 67 points hold the final wild card spot, and the Florida Panthers (64).

"We're back in the race now," Flyers' captain Claude Giroux said after Sunday's 3-2 victory.

It didn't seem possible last month. On Jan. 16, the Flyers were a season-worst 13 points out of the wild card spot, had lost four of their last six and their season was quickly tumbling out of control.

However, they are 8-1-4 in their last 13 games since Jan. 20, when they beat the Penguins in the final game before the All-Star break and have gained 20 out of a possible 26 points. The Flyers have played 10 games that have been decided by one goal during the stretch and are 6-0-4 in those contests.

"We had to [change]. We were going in the wrong direction," defenseman Braydon Coburn said. "It's a good four points we earned this weekend at home. Now we have to go on the road [to Carolina Tuesday and Toronto on Thursday] and keep this thing going. We got ourselves right in the mix now."

The key to the turnaround has been putting three good periods together and finishing strong.

"We are just playing 60 minutes of hockey," said Michael Del Zotto, who scored Sunday's game-winner late in the third period. "I think before we were finding ways to lose instead of finding ways to win. We're doing that now."

Even with the latest two wins, the job is far from over.

"[This weekend was] a huge boost, but we've beaten other good teams this year," coach Craig Berube said. "We just have to carry it on."

By the numbers

3

The Flyers power play is the third best in the NHL with a 23.6 percent success rate.

Giroux netted a goal and assist in Sunday's big win. / GETTY IMAGES

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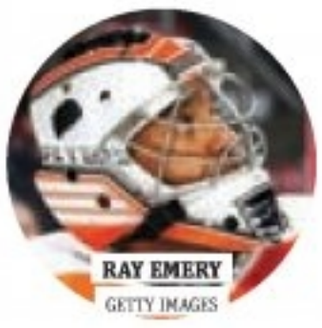
NHL. Will the Flyers be buyers or sellers at NHL trade deadline?

The NHL trade deadline is March 2, and unlike the other major sports, it's typically a frenzy of a day. However, with little cap room, no real trade chips and a refusal to deal prospects, Flyers GM Ron Hextall will probably be rather quiet this season. Even still, keep an eye on these three players who could find themselves on different teams.



Ray Emery
Coach Craig Berube has shown little faith recently in the veteran backup goalie, who is 1-4 in his last five starts and has been inconsistent all season. Berube even started minor-league journeyman Rob Zepp in back-to-back games over Emery over the weekend.

Braydon Coburn
Coburn would bring a steady and veteran presence to any team's blue line that is looking to make a deep playoff run and relieve the Flyers of his $4.5 million cap hit through next year. The Flyers have depth on defense and could absorb his loss.

Jordan Eberle
It's a wild card, but the Flyers have been linked to the Oilers talented right-winger for a couple of years. The 24-year-old, who scored 34 goals in 2011-2012, could arrive in a package deal — highlighted by Coburn, maybe — and provide an offensive boost to one of the top lines.

ERIC GOLDSTEIN

NHL power rankings | by Rich Slate

No. 1

Predators (40-13-7)

I hate to sound like a broken record (do kids still know what those are?) but the Predators are the top team in the NHL and there is still no debate about that. Nashville has six more points than any other club and they are tied with the Rangers and Blues for the best goal-differential in the league (plus-40). The Predators are also 25-3-1 at home this season, which is insane.

No. 2

Canadiens (38-16-5)

It might be their location, but at least stateside, Montreal's ascent this season has been rather quiet. They have the most points (81) in the East and are tied with Anaheim for the second most in the NHL. The Canadiens are only one point ahead of Tampa but have three games in hand against their rivals.

No. 3

Blues (38-17-4)

Nashville is starting to pull away from St. Louis (up seven points) but the Blues are almost a lock for a top-four seed in the Western Conference playoffs. Their 186 goals scored are the second most in the West behind Dallas (189). St. Louis has a huge game at home vs. Montreal on Tuesday.

No. 4

Lightning (39-17-4)

The Lightning have slipped up a bit lately (5-4-1 in its last 10 games) to allow Montreal to leapfrog them into first place in the Eastern Conference and Atlantic Division. The Lightning have scored 203 goals this season, the most in the NHL. They host Chicago Friday.

No. 5

Islanders (39-20-2)

The Metropolitan is by far the best race in the NHL, with only four points separating the top four teams. Whoever wins it will definitely have earned their crown. A 4-0 loss at home to the Canucks on Sunday was surprising, but the Islanders can bounce back with three games at home this week.

No. 6

Ducks (37-16-7)

John Gibson looked a bit overwhelmed in his first couple games back as the Ducks' starting goaltender, but he has won the last two contests. Anaheim has three games at Honda Center this week, against the Red Wings, Senators and Kings.

No. 7

Rangers (36-16-6)

The Rangers' freight train continues to roll: New York is 7-1-2 in its last 10 games to pull into second place in the Metro. The Rangers are only two points behind their rivals from Long Island. If the postseason began today, the Rangers would be the fourth seed, remarkable considering their start.

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MACNOW: SAM THE SHAM AND THE 76ERS BIG CON

Opinion

GLEN MACNOW
REALGLENMACNOW
Glen Macnow has been an outspoken voice in Philly sports for nearly three decades.

Sam Hinkie continues the 76ers' epic rebuilding process with no end in sight. / GETTY IMAGES

I address this column to the hoops wonks, the hipsters, the analytics-loving, draft-pick craving Sixers loyalists who regard GM Sam Hinkie as the smartest guy in the room.

Wake up, nerds. Smell your overpriced barista-prepared coffee. Sam is a sham. You're following a false messiah.

I recognize, and sympathize, with your cause. The only way for the Sixers to really contend is to be awful first. (Well, they've got that part down.) Collect those lottery picks, free up more cap space, and somehow Sam will turn all those "assets" and "optionality" into a Larry O'Brien Trophy.

There is some logic there. I've even endorsed aspects of the long-game, saying in this space a week ago that I'd put my money behind Joel Embiid being Philadelphia's top pro athlete by 2018.

But every race needs a finish line, every project needs a deadline. What became apparent at last week's NBA trade deadline is that Hinkie is under no pressure to actually improve this team. Asked what the timetable is to progress from, you know, pathetic, he said, "What a disservice I would do to the franchise and the city if I put that upon myself."

And so, like the kid losing on PlayStation, he simply hit "reset," trading Michael Carter-Williams for some nebulous future Lakers draft pick. I'm not going to tell you that MCW projects to be the next Jason Kidd — even if he is now coached by Kidd. But he was the best player on the team and a guy who just three days earlier was a centerpiece of the new marketing campaign: "This Starts Now." Or maybe it doesn't.

Quoted

"Wake up, nerds. Smell your overpriced barista-prepared coffee. Sam is a sham. You're following a false messiah."

The lottery-protected pick the Sixers got back stands just an 18 percent chance of being realized this year. Without going into the mind-numbing detail, it's further protected for another two years so that there's actually a good chance whomever the Sixers finally draft may not have yet attended his high school prom.

But that's Hinkie's scheme. Just keep you folks awaiting a future that never arrives. Every time there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel, he just moves the tunnel. This way, he's got no accountability.

I know I can't sway the true believers. This modern-day Charles Ponzi has you in his grasp. It's a different plan (as in, it's not Brand or Bynum or Stefanski or Collins) so you assume it must be great.

It's not. It's the big con. Call me a Neanderthal if you like. But clip and save this column. If Sam the Sham (credit Ray Didinger with that nickname) pulls this off by, say, 2018, I will personally allow you to shove it up my nose. If not, you owe me a beer. And not a hipster PBR.

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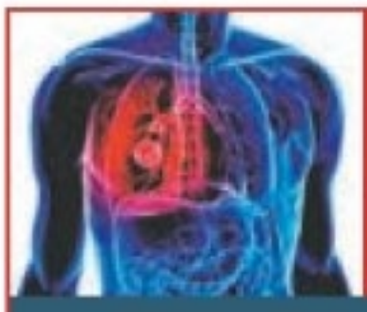

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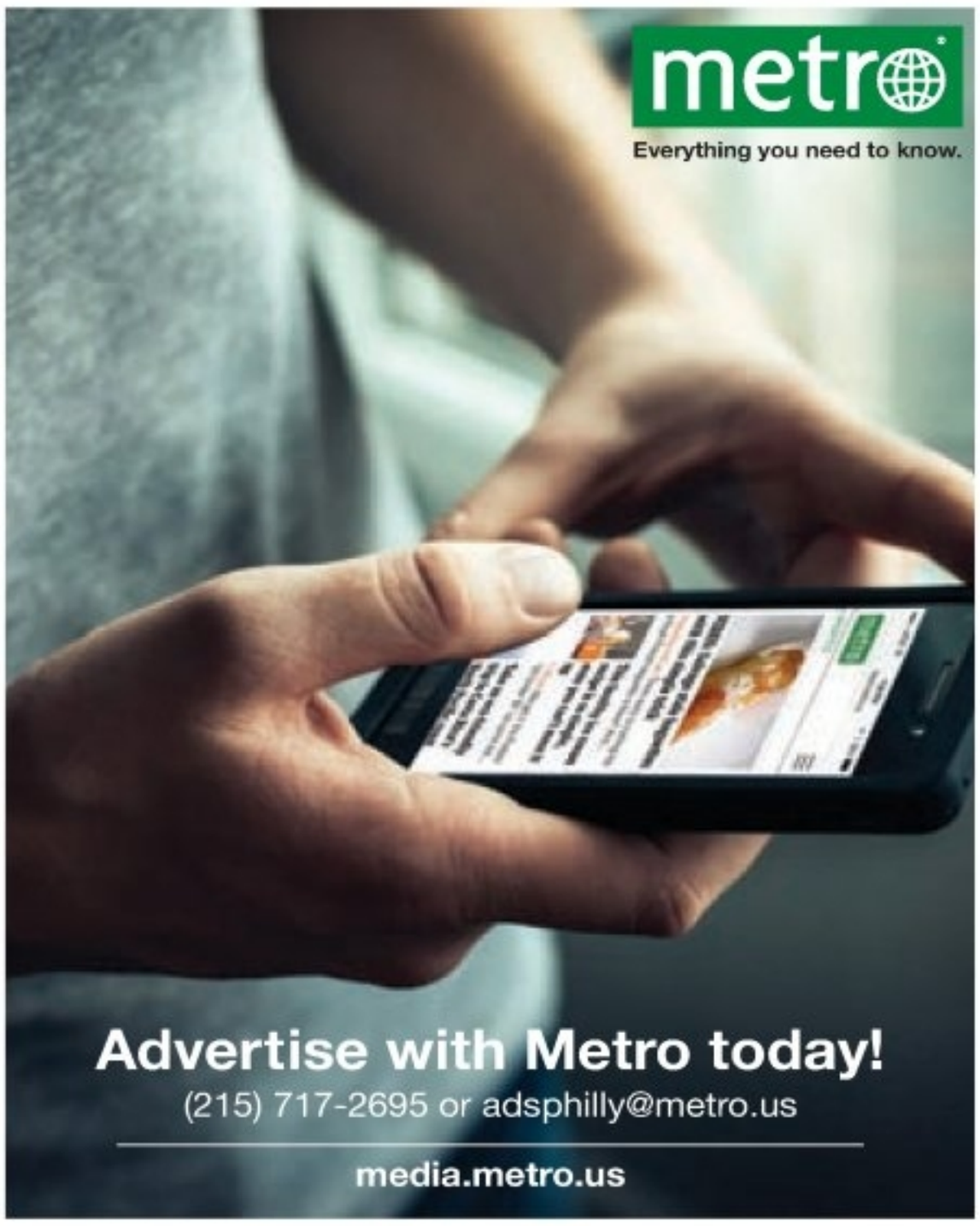

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